



The Harvest

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Why Hanukkah Was Important to Jesus and Should Be to You

11.14.20 | Weekly Study

START

Start your study by inviting God's presence to meet with you as you study His word.

MAIN VERSES

[John 10:22-23](#)

OVERVIEW

Hanukkah is almost here! Hanukkah was and remains one of the most joyful celebrations in Israel's history. Gentile Christians are starting to come to terms with the fact that Jesus is Jewish and salvation is of the Jews. They are realizing that they are grafted into a Jewish olive tree (Romans 11) and are full citizens in the Israel of God (Ephesians 2). Additionally, Christians are surprised to discover that Hanukkah is in the New Testament! They may not understand what it is nor why Jesus would be in Jerusalem during this festival, but their spiritual antennas seem to be up and they are becoming increasingly inquisitive. In this teaching we will unpack the mystery of the reference to Hanukkah in John 10:22-23. You will be pleasantly enlightened by the illumination of this Jewish Festival called Hanukkah!

CONTENT

[Read John 10:22-23](#)

What does the Hebrew word Hannukah mean?

Hanukkah means the feast of dedication. In John 10:22, most translations use the Greek word for "dedication" or "re-dedication" when referring to the eight-day festival called "Hanukkah" but there are some English translations that actually translate the Greek word as "Hanukkah" rather than "dedication" (see the Tree of Life translation as an example). They do this because Hanukkah means "dedication".

What is Hannukah?

Hannukah is the eight day festival that memorializes the initial fulfillment of the prophecies in Daniel 8-11 and are recorded in the books of the Maccabees. The word “Hanukkah” specifically refers to the event in which the Jewish people take back, by the grace of God, Jerusalem and their temple from pagans who had defiled and destroyed it. In deep gratitude to God, they cleansed the temple and rededicated it and their lives to serving God with all their hearts, minds, and strength. This dedication led to an eight day festival, marked with food, drink, fellowship, and worship. Light was one of the main symbols. By the time the event we read about in John 10:22 takes place, Israel had celebrated this eight day festival once a year for nearly 200 years.

Why did Jesus attend this event at the temple in Jerusalem? Was it just a coincidence that He would be there during Hanukkah or did He have a purpose in mind?

There are some powerful indicators that it was not a coincidence He was there during Hanukkah. His original ministry base was north in Galilee. To travel to Jerusalem in the winter would be an arduous journey that one would only make deliberately. To do this would convey some significant importance. Some scholars make the point that He was already in the area and decided to stay there because Hanukkah was coming. Either way, this tells us that Jesus was there in the temple during Hanukkah by intent. Keep in mind that the biggest and most extravagant celebrations of Hanukkah would be in Jerusalem and specifically, in the temple area. For whatever reason, Hanukkah appears to be deeply important to Jesus. As we move down into the immediate context of John 10:22-23 it becomes clearer as to why Jesus wanted to be at the temple in Jerusalem during Hanukkah. Join us next Shabbat to take a closer look at why Hanukkah was deeply important to Jesus and why it should be for us who follow Him!

TAKE ACTION

Take some time to read Daniel 8-11 and then click on the link below to read at least the first five chapters of the 1st Book of the Maccabees as you prepare for this season of Hanukkah.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Maccabees%201&version=GNT>